Focus on your food to help limit climate change.

Wednesday 30 November, 2016

2016 is set to be the hottest year on record with preliminary data indicating global warming reaching 1.2°C. As we get perilously close to the 1.5°C limit agreed at the Paris climate summit, Climates social network is calling on people to focus on food to help limit climate change and make their New Year's resolution to go climatarian.

'If you make just one New Year's resolution for 2017, pledge to go climatarian,' says Biba Hartigan, Director of Climates. 'Just a simple diet shift can have a really big impact. If everyone in the UK went climatarian it would cut 10% of the UK's annual greenhouse gas emissions. It's the easiest way for people to help the climate and it's good for your health too.'

Simply swapping beef and lamb for pork and poultry in your everyday meals knocks a whole tonne off your annual carbon footprint. That's equivalent to the emissions from driving 3,500 miles or six short-haul flights but much easier to achieve. You don't have to change your lifestyle or even your cooking habits. Reducing consumption of red and processed meat has been proven to lower the risk of heart disease and cancer.

The latest meteorological data reveals that climate change is now an acute problem. It needs to be addressed with urgency at every level, government, business and individual. Food causes 24% of global greenhouse gases which is comparable to all the emissions from electricity and heat (25%) and far more than transport (14%). Food is where individuals have a significant role to play as a small change in diet can have a surprisingly large impact.

According to the World Meteorological Organisation, 2016 is set to be the hottest year on record with global temperatures even higher than the record-breaking temperatures in 2015. 16 of the warmest 17 years on record have occurred this century. Long term climate change indicators are also continuing to break records:

- Arctic sea ice is at its second ever lowest level;
- Sea levels are rising faster;
- Ocean warming has bleached half the Great Barrier Reef;
- Major weather events in 2016 included Hurricane Matthew which devastated Haiti, heavy flooding in North Korea, Fiji's worst ever cyclone, Canada's worst ever wildfire, flooding in the Yangtse basin, while India, Kuwait, Iraq and Iran saw temperatures soar to over 50°C;
- Despite global emissions levelling out, concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere continue to rise to new record levels.

Urgent action is required now to reduce emissions and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees to prevent dangerous and irreversible climate change. The easiest and most effective action for individuals is to go climatarian. It's not all or nothing. Even if you go climatarian half the time you'll still be making a real difference.

Pledge to go climatarian at www.climatarian.com and watch your carbon savings grow day by day.

ENDS

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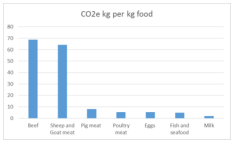
NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Beef and lamb have five times the climate impact of other meats. See www.climatarian.com for more information on the relative impacts of different foods and the rationale for the climatarian diet.

2. The diet is informed by research and analysis from the International Panel on Climate Change, Oxford University, The Cary Institute, The University of Minnesota, University of California, The Environmental Working Group, The UN Environment Programme and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation among others. For full references see www.climatarian.com.

3. The calculation is based on average UK meat consumption of 110g/day and replacing beef and lamb in day to day meals throughout the year. Average meat consumption in the USA is 156g/day. Therefore,

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the CO2e (Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions) savings per head are potentially significantly more than one tonne a year in the USA. The average carbon footprint in the Uk is 10 tonnes CO2e per year. In the USA it is 19 tonnes of CO2e per year.

4. Large studies have revealed links between eating red and processed meat and an increased risk of heart disease and cancer. Red meat includes ruminant and pig meat, and processed meat includes bacon, sausages, ham and salami. While eating a small amount of red meat has been shown to be beneficial, studies agree that processed meats raise the risks.

5. Climate change statistics derived from World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) report Provisional Statement Status of Global Climate 2016 published for COP22 Morocco, November 14.

i) Arctic sea ice extent was well below normal throughout the year. The seasonal minimum in September was equal-second lowest extent on record after 2012.

ii) Global temperatures for January to September 2016 were approximately 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels.

iii) Global sea levels rose about 15 millimetres between November 2014 and February 2016 as a result of El Niño, well above the post-1993 trend of 3 to 3.5 mm per year, with the early 2016 values reaching new record highs.

iv) Annual average global carbon dioxide concentrations in 2015 reached 400 parts per million (ppm) for the first time. Initial observations indicate new records in 2016. At Cape Grim (Australia), CO_2 levels in August averaged 401.42 ppm, compared with 398.13 ppm in August 2015. At Mauna Loa (Hawaii), mean weekly concentrations of CO_2 as of 23 October were 402.07 ppm, compared with 398.50 ppm at the same time in 2015, whilst the May 2016 value of 407.7 ppm was the highest monthly value on record.

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